

# Inventions That Changed Our World

What Would We Do Without... ?

bubble gum  
invented in 1906 by Frank Henry Fleer

Silly Putty  
invented in 1943 by James Wright

basketball  
invented in 1891 by James Naismith

Velcro  
invented in 1948 by George de Mestral

People have been inventing things for years. Paper was invented about 2,000 years ago. The wheel was invented more than 5,000 years ago. What would life be like without paper to write on or bikes to ride? Those inventions have made life easier.

## Airplane

The Wright brothers invented the first airplane in December 1903. That makes 2003 the 100th anniversary! Before the airplane was invented, most people traveled by cars, boats, and trains. Today, airplanes help people travel faster. How do airplanes help you?

## Telephone

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. Before the telephone was invented, people kept in touch by writing letters or talking in person. Today, the telephone makes it easier for people to talk to one another. How do telephones help you?

## Automobile

The first four-wheeled gas-powered car was invented by Karl Benz in 1891. Before people had cars, they couldn't travel easily. They walked or rode horses for short trips. They took trains or boats for long trips. Today, cars are one of the main ways people travel. How do cars help you?

## Computer

People worked for years to make the first computer. It was built in 1946. The first computer was called ENIAC. Today, computers are an important part of many people's lives. People use computers as tools to write, get information, and much more. How do computers help you?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which of the following are two inventions in the passage that were invented before 1900?

- A the telephone and the game of basketball
- B the car and the computer
- C bubblegum and Velcro
- D the airplane and the automobile

2. What do all the inventions described in this text have in common?

- A All these inventions were invented in the twentieth century.
- B All these inventions were invented by Americans.
- C All these inventions made people's lives easier.
- D All these inventions changed how people travel.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A the Wright Brothers spent a long time trying to invent the airplane
- B someone had the idea to invent the computer in the 1930s or early 1940s
- C Karl Benz didn't like to walk or ride horses for short trips
- D Alexander Graham Bell wrote many letters in his lifetime

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question: "The Wright brothers invented the first airplane in December 1903. That makes 2003 the 100th anniversary!"

What does the word **anniversary** most nearly mean?

- A an interesting idea
- B an event
- C a statement of fact
- D a celebrated date

5. The primary purpose of this passage is to describe

- A the invention of the airplane in December 1903
- B some inventions that have made a big difference
- C some ways that computers help make our lives easier
- D the reasons that Karl Benz invented the gas-powered car

6. Name two ways that people communicated before the telephone was invented.

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7. According to the passage, what do the airplane and the automobile have in common?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ the telephone was invented, people kept in touch by writing letters or talking in person.

- A After
- B Although
- C Before
- D Since

9. Answer the questions based on the sentence below.

Today, computers have changed the way most people live because they allow us to communicate, have fun, write, and get information quickly.

What? computers

(have done) What? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

**10.** Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

**Vocabulary Word:** invention (in · ven · tion): a useful new thing that has been made for the first time.

**10a.** Read the five sentences below and underline the word **invention** in each sentence.

1. Before the invention of the printing press, there were very few books.
2. The invention of the computer has completely changed our world.
3. Many people are grateful for the invention of the game of basketball.
4. For the science fair, students will bring their inventions to show to the class.
5. I think my favorite invention is the automobile because I love to go on car trips.

**10b.** Which image shows an older invention?



**11.** If you added new wheels to your bicycle, would you have invented a new type of bicycle? Why or why not?

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